

Wrobel, Ralph

Working Paper

Global Gateway and Africa: Old wine in new bottles? A critical analysis of EU development aid discourses

Ordnungspolitische Diskurse, No. 2025-1

Provided in Cooperation with:
OrdnungsPolitisches Portal (OPO)

Suggested Citation: Wrobel, Ralph (2025) : Global Gateway and Africa: Old wine in new bottles? A critical analysis of EU development aid discourses, Ordnungspolitische Diskurse, No. 2025-1, OrdnungsPolitisches Portal (OPO), Erfurt

This Version is available at:
<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/320421>

Standard-Nutzungsbedingungen:

Die Dokumente auf EconStor dürfen zu eigenen wissenschaftlichen Zwecken und zum Privatgebrauch gespeichert und kopiert werden.

Sie dürfen die Dokumente nicht für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, öffentlich zugänglich machen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Sofern die Verfasser die Dokumente unter Open-Content-Lizenzen (insbesondere CC-Lizenzen) zur Verfügung gestellt haben sollten, gelten abweichend von diesen Nutzungsbedingungen die in der dort genannten Lizenz gewährten Nutzungsrechte.

Terms of use:

Documents in EconStor may be saved and copied for your personal and scholarly purposes.

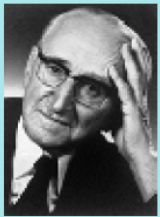
You are not to copy documents for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the documents publicly, to make them publicly available on the internet, or to distribute or otherwise use the documents in public.

If the documents have been made available under an Open Content Licence (especially Creative Commons Licences), you may exercise further usage rights as specified in the indicated licence.



Ordnungspolitische Diskurse

Discourses in Social Market Economy



Ralph Wrobel

**Global Gateway and Africa: Old Wine in
New Bottles? - A Critical Analysis of EU
Development Aid Discourses**

Diskurs 2025 - 1

Global Gateway and Africa: Old Wine in New Bottles?

A Critical Analysis of EU Development Aid Discourses

Ralph Wrobel

Abstract

This paper examines the European Union's (EU) Global Gateway initiative, launched in December 2021, analysing its role in shaping EU-Africa relations and its strategic shift from traditional development aid to a more investment-driven approach. The initiative aims to mobilize €300 billion in infrastructure development, particularly in Africa, as an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative. By comparing the Global Gateway with conventional EU Official Development Assistance (ODA), the paper explores its geopolitical implications, funding structures, and African perceptions. It concludes that the initiative represents a hybrid model, balancing development goals with geopolitical ambitions, while posing questions about its long-term impact and transparency.

Keywords: Global Gateway, Official Development Assistance (ODA), EU, Africa

Author

Ralph M. Wrobel is professor of economics, especially economic policy, and coordinating member of the East Asia Centre at the University of Applied Sciences Zwickau, Germany. His research focusses on institutional economics as well as on economic transformation in East Asia with regional focus on China and Korea. E-Mail: ralph.wrobel@fh-zwickau.de

Global Gateway and Africa: Old Wine in New Bottles?

A Critical Analysis of EU Development Aid Discourses

Ralph Wrobel

1. Introduction

Following decolonization, Europe's engagement with Africa was primarily guided by a development-oriented approach grounded in normative ideals such as shared values, the promotion of democracy, and human rights. For many years, European policies emphasized humanitarian aid and capacity-building while deliberately steering clear of direct political or military involvement—supporting initiatives like rural electrification, water and sanitation, civil society, and institutional reforms. In recent years, however, growing geopolitical rivalries, evolving migration dynamics, increasing reliance on strategic resources, and the waning clout of former colonial powers have driven a notable shift toward a more strategic and interest-based engagement. Accordingly, nowadays the European Union (EU) is positioning itself as an emerging geopolitical actor, leveraging its economic weight, regulatory power, and diplomatic outreach to shape global affairs. As the world's largest single market, the EU influences international standards in trade, digital policy, and climate regulation, extending its reach far beyond its borders.

In this context, the Global Gateway, launched in December 2021, represents the EU's flagship infrastructure investment strategy. It aims to mobilize several billion Euros in public and private funds within the next years to promote infrastructure development, particularly in Africa, as well as in Latin America, Asia, and the Indo-Pacific. (Gherasim 2024, 3) Framed as a sustainable and values-driven alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the Global Gateway seeks to offer transparent, green, and fair infrastructure partnerships. However, questions remain as to whether this initiative marks a genuine shift in the EU's development approach—or whether it simply rebrands conventional Official Development Assistance (ODA) under a new geopolitical narrative. This paper addresses this question through a comparative analysis. First, it outlines the origins, objectives, and instruments of the Global Gateway. Second, it compares the initiative to traditional European ODA, focusing on funding structures, recipient regions, developmental versus geopolitical goals and conditionalities. Additionally, it explores African perceptions of the Global Gateway, assessing whether it is seen as a meaningful departure from earlier EU development practices. In this way, the aim is to determine whether

the EU's Global Gateway initiative represents a new form of geopolitically driven development aid, or merely old wine in new bottles.

2. The EU's Global Gateway: A New Paradigm?

Global governance in relation to the African continent has historically relied heavily on development aid and ODA as primary instruments. This approach was largely shaped by post-colonial dynamics and the widespread classification of African nations as Least Developed Countries (LDCs), characterized by high levels of poverty and extreme deprivation. Although the Chinese BRI continuing to expand in scope and duration—despite international criticism and delays caused by the global pandemic—democratic economies around the world have become increasingly committed to developing countermeasures and alternative initiatives. This effort to forge a global consensus in response to the BRI has led to the involvement of a growing number of new actors over the years. In this context, also the EU has positioned itself as a major contributor to shaping a global response, launching its Global Gateway strategy on 1 December 2021. This move followed the EU's characterization of the BRI as a non-transparent project that undermines the “traditional model of multilateral infrastructure financing,” and its call for a “joint Western alternative” to counterbalance the BRI's growing influence. (Panda 2025, 178) The EU was motivated by China's growing influence in Africa, prompting the initiation of Global Gateway as a tool for EU power projection. In recent years, such a counterbalancing programme has become increasingly urgent. Still in 2010, the EU and China each accounted for roughly 40% of construction and investment in Africa. By 2018, China's share had surged to 60%, already, while Europe's declined to just 20%. In this context, the Global Gateway also aims to reinvigorate EU-Africa relations and enhance Europe's competitiveness not only in Africa but also across other developing regions, particularly in response to China's expanding influence. (van Wieringen 2024, 3)

The “Global Gateway” was designed to advance the EU's aspiration of becoming a global power, the initiative leverages the Union's economic strength and political appeal. The Global Gateway aims to mobilize up to €300 billion in public and private infrastructure investments by 2027. This includes up to €135 billion through the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+), backed by €40 billion in EU loan guarantees. Of this, €26.7 billion will be managed by the European Investment Bank (EIB), and €13.3 billion will be channeled through an EFSD+ window to guarantee loans from national development finance institutions. An additional €145 billion is expected from EU member states' development finance institutions, supported by EU-level guarantees, while €18 billion will come in the form of grants from EU

external assistance programs. The initiative will prioritize five key sectors: digital infrastructure (including secure, open internet), climate and clean energy, transport, health (such as vaccines and supply chains), and education and research. The proposal also outlines the creation of a European Export Credit Facility to enhance the global competitiveness of EU businesses and complement existing national export credit systems. (Furness and Keijzer 2022, 2)

The Global Gateway was made possible by a shift towards private investment in multilateral development financing. This new approach enables the EU to support its business sector, helping them compete with Chinese state-owned enterprises. In order to implement this, the European Commission played a pivotal role as a transformative leader, backed by influential EU member states. The Commission seized this opportunity to design a geopolitical strategy that would facilitate private sector investment to finance infrastructure development on a global scale. (Heldt 2023, 1 – 2) Global Gateway projects are carried out using a “Team Europe” approach, which combines resources in a flexible way from the EU budget, the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), participating Member States, national development finance institutions, and the private sector. (Gherasim 2024, 3)

Strategically, it is intended to offer partner countries a viable alternative to China’s BRI. The Global Gateway aims to establish the EU’s own sphere of influence, particularly in a region where it has long engaged but now risks losing ground to China’s expanding and assertive statecraft. But, the Global Gateway aims to mobilize bilateral, multilateral, and private-sector capital to invest in areas such as climate and health security, modern digital technologies, gender equity, and social inclusion. Therefore, some observers see the Global Gateway more complementary than directly competitive to the BRI, which remains largely focused on traditional hard infrastructure and physical connectivity. (Panda 2025, 180-181) In contrast, others highlight that also Global Gateway flagship projects are heavily concentrated in physical infrastructure investments. Over the three-year period, approximately half of these projects, on average, fall within the climate and energy sector. In contrast, less than 10 percent are dedicated to education and research, while projects in the health sector account for just over 10 percent of the total. (Gavas and Granito 2024) Additionally, the EU has consistently maintained that its interests are not in conflict with the needs of impoverished populations in the Global South. In its 2016 Global Strategy, this approach was described as “principled pragmatism.” However, the Global Gateway initiative appears to continue the trend of using EU development aid as a tool to advance European economic and security objectives, focusing on “protection” from real or perceived “threats” originating from neighbouring countries. (Furness and Keijzer 2022, 3) This raises the question of to what extent Global Gateway differs from traditional European development aid, and what implications this has for the African recipient countries.

3. From Traditional ODA to the Global Gateway: A Comparative Analysis for Africa

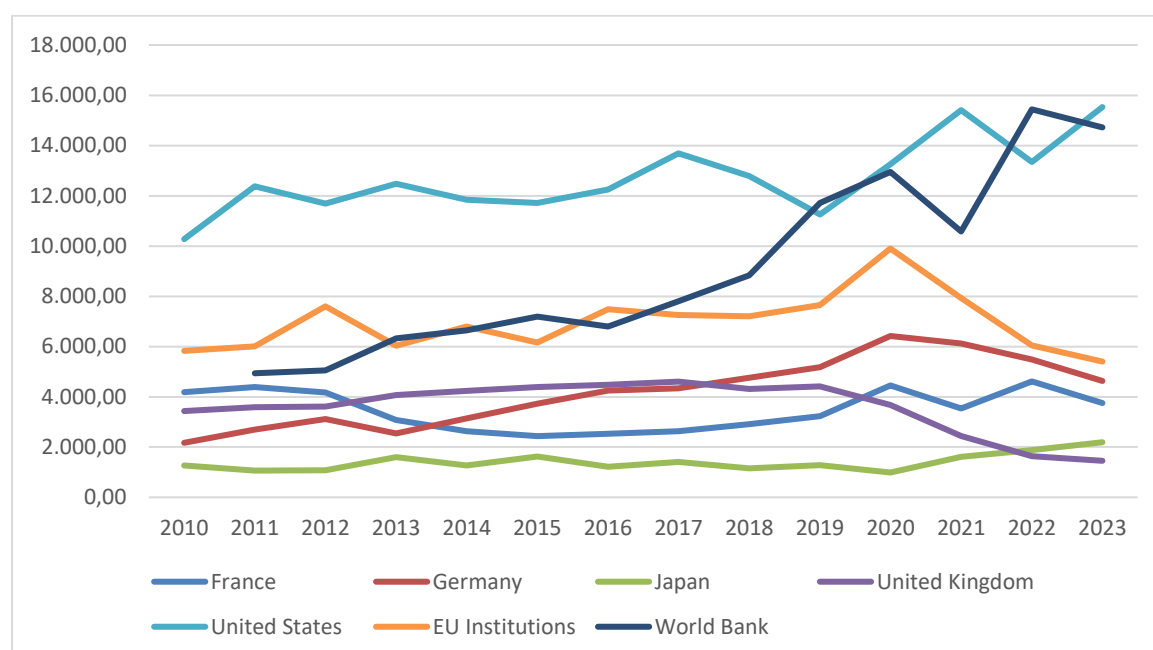
3.1 Volume, Allocation, and Geographic Focus

Europe has traditionally been one of the largest providers of development aid to Africa. In a report, the European Council (2024) highlights that EU collective ODA rose to €95.9 billion in 2023, compared to €93.3 billion in 2022 and €71.6 billion in 2021. This steady increase since 2021 shall reflect the EU and its Member States' reinforced commitment to supporting developing countries and vulnerable populations, carried out under the Team Europe framework. But, the Team Europe approach combines resources from the EU budget and other sources, e.g. the private sector. Therefore, it is not surprising that OECD data shows Africa's share of global aid dropped to its lowest point this century in 2022, despite overall aid levels reaching a historic peak. That year, the total ODA allocated to nearly 1.5 billion people across Africa was roughly equal to the amount provided to Ukraine—home to just 44 million people—and to in-country refugee costs, much of which were linked to the war response. Recent development funding cuts—amounting to 6% of annual aid from Germany, France, and the EU—stem from domestic budget pressures: Germany faced a €17 billion budget gap, prompting a €2 billion cut in foreign aid; France trimmed €800 million to reduce its deficit; and the EU redirected over €2 billion from development funds to migration management while securing a €50 billion Ukraine package. Therefore, pledges like the EU's commitment to invest €150 billion in Africa through the Global Gateway initiative are based on ambitious funding assumptions, yet there is little transparency regarding the actual disbursement of funds. (Alemayehou and McNair 2024)

In concrete, Africa receives ODA from several industrialised countries, mainly US and EU member states, but also from international institutions like the World Bank or EU institutions. As figure 1 shows, in 2023, the United States and World Bank were the largest providers of ODA to Africa, each disbursing around \$16 billion. The World Bank showed a steady rise in aid since 2016, while U.S. aid, though consistently high, experienced some fluctuations before rebounding strongly. EU institutions ranked third with nearly \$6 billion, followed by Germany and France, which each provided between \$4–5 billion. The United Kingdom saw a sharp decline in its aid levels after 2019, falling below \$2 billion by 2023, while Japan consistently provided the lowest aid among the donors shown, remaining under \$2 billion throughout the period.

Fig. 1: Official Development Assistance disbursements to Africa (by selected donors)

(in US dollar, Millions, 2023)



Data: OECD (2025).

In the next years, the scaling back of USAID and Washington's wider withdrawal from development assistance in the beginning of 2025 will leave a power vacuum in the global development landscape which can be filled by the EU – or China. Therefore, the launch of the Africa-Europe Investment Package, which aims to mobilize around €150 billion in partnership with African countries by 2027, marked an initial implementation step of the Global Gateway strategy. The package seeks to enhance both public and private investment to support Africa's inclusive, green, and digital transformation. It prioritizes key sectors such as clean energy, biodiversity, sustainable agriculture, climate resilience, disaster risk reduction, transport infrastructure, health systems, science and technology, as well as education and vocational training in Africa. Additionally, it aims to strengthen businesses and promote sustainable value chains, including those related to minerals and raw materials. (van Wieringen 2024, 3)

Tab. 1: Comparison: EU ODA (pre-2021) vs. Global Gateway (Post-2021)

	EU ODA to Africa (Before 2021)	Global Gateway ODA to Africa (Post-2021)
Primary Focus	Development aid with an emphasis on stability, governance, and regional integration	Investment-driven approach targeting inclusive, green, and digital transformation
Key Sectors	1. Peace, Security, and Governance 2. Economic Integration and Trade 3. Infrastructure Development 4. Food and Nutrition Security 5. Natural Resource Management	1. Clean Energy and Climate Resilience 2. Biodiversity and Sustainable Agriculture 3. Transport Infrastructure 4. Health Systems 5. Science, Technology, Education, and Vocational Training 6. Sustainable Value Chains (e.g., raw materials)
Development Model	Emphasis on public sector-led aid and stability-focused partnerships	Emphasis on investment partnerships , leveraging private capital and promoting economic self-sufficiency
Geopolitical Intent	Foster long-term stability and prevent conflict through institutional support	Promote EU-Africa connectivity and reduce dependency on other global actors , especially in critical infrastructure and raw materials
Environmental and Digital Emphasis	Environmental sustainability was included (e.g., natural resource management), but digital development was limited	Strong emphasis on green transition and digital infrastructure , aligning with EU's internal policy priorities (e.g., Green Deal, Digital Decade)

Source: author's own depiction.

But does this represent a fundamental shift in the objectives of European ODA? Key Sectors of EU ODA to Africa before 2021 were (1) Peace, Security, and Governance: The EU supported initiatives aimed at enhancing regional stability, conflict prevention, and governance reforms. (2) Economic Integration and Trade: Efforts were made to promote regional economic integration, support trade facilitation, and strengthen economic partnerships. (3) Infrastructure Development: Investments were directed towards improving transport networks, energy interconnections, and other critical infrastructure to foster economic growth. (4) Food and Nutrition Security: Programs focused on enhancing food security, agricultural development, and nutrition, particularly in rural areas. (5) Sustainable Natural Resource Management: The EU supported sustainable management of natural resources, including initiatives related to environmental conservation and climate change adaptation. (European Commission 2018) For this

reason, one could argue that while EU ODA prior to 2021 prioritized peace, governance, and regional integration with a strong focus on development aid, the Global Gateway strategy shifts towards a market-oriented, investment-driven model. The latter integrates environmental sustainability and digitalization more deeply and explicitly promotes African economic autonomy through sustainable value chains and infrastructure. (see tab. 1)

Also, a comparison of Global Gateway with the Chinese BRI project gives insights into volume and structure of the European initiative. First, the BRI operates on a much larger scale than the Global Gateway. While estimates of China's financial engagement in Africa vary, the Chinese Loans to Africa Database at Boston University's Global Development Policy Center reports that Chinese lenders made 1,188 loan commitments totalling \$160 billion to African governments and state-owned enterprises already between 2000 and 2020. In comparison, the EU's Global Gateway aims to mobilize €150 billion for Africa between 2021 and 2027. However, China's investments in Africa are ongoing and expected to continue throughout this period. (Foretia 2024, 19) There are also calculations, that the BRI offered loans ranging from €200 billion to €400 billion, according to various estimates from the American Enterprise Institute and UNCTAD. (Tagliapietra 2023, 1327) This would clearly place the European Global Gateway Program in second place. Additionally, it must also be taken into consideration that, while the Global Gateway adds strategic focus and geopolitical intent (e.g., countering China's Belt and Road), its financial volume significantly overlaps with existing ODA commitments. Therefore, it is better understood as a reframing and consolidation of European development finance—not a separate pot of additional aid.

The geographical and thematic distribution of Global Gateway flagship projects is quite obvious, with most in Africa and focused on climate and energy. In 2023, more than half of the projects were located in Africa, much less in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as a few in the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, altogether. Out of 199, 83 projects focussed on climate and energy, 37 on digital development and 31 on health issues. In contrast, only 21 projects are touching the transport sector. (van Wieringen 2024, 3) And in 2024, an expanding number of flagship initiatives have been linked to the Global Gateway, with Africa remaining its primary focus. As of May 2024, Africa accounted for 116 out of 225 global flagship projects—44 launched in 2023 and 72 in 2024. At the current pace, the number of African projects is expected to exceed 200 by the time the Global Gateway reaches its projected conclusion in 2030—and likely continue beyond that. (ETTg 2024) In contrast to the Global Gateway, China's BRI focuses on large-scale physical infrastructure projects, particularly in sectors such as transportation, mining, energy (including fossil fuels), and telecommunications. While funding began in the early 2000s, the initiative significantly expanded in 2013 under the BRI framework. It primarily relies on loans and places limited emphasis on human rights, social values,

or intellectual property standards. Instead, EU's Global Gateway Initiative prioritizes sustainable investments in infrastructure—covering digital, energy, and transport—as well as in health, education, skills development, climate action, and environmental protection. It emphasizes transparency and adherence to high environmental and social standards. Financing includes grants, concessional loans, and guarantees aimed at leveraging private sector involvement. The initiative also seeks to uphold human rights, the rule of law, and international norms. (Foretia et al. 2024, 20) Also that shows, that European Global Gateway is not a direct competitor of the Chinese BRI but more complimentary to it.

3.2 Developmental versus Geopolitical Goals in Africa

Connectivity plays a central role in Africa's development agenda. Both the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) prioritize the expansion of physical and digital infrastructure to link people, markets, and nations, serving as a catalyst for economic growth, trade, and investment. Infrastructure is also widely regarded as essential for advancing other key sectors like agriculture and manufacturing. The continent's financing gap is estimated up to \$100 billion per year. (Eickhoff 2023, 1) Several development partners are addressing this shortfall, mainly the Chinese BRI but also the European Global Gateway.

Fundamentally, the European Global Gateway initiative is a form of development aid aimed at better coordinating and consolidating the previously fragmented European efforts. Under the umbrella of Global Gateway Team Europe initiatives in Africa are designed to advance five key objectives: (1) Accelerating the green transition, (2) Advancing digital transformation, (3) Promoting sustainable economic growth and better labour standards, (4) Strengthening health and pharmaceutical systems, and (5) Enhancing education and skills development. The first objective focuses on maximizing the benefits of a job-rich green transition while minimizing environmental risks, thereby contributing to the global fight against climate change. For its second objective, the Global Gateway aims to enhance digital connectivity by supporting the deployment of submarine and terrestrial fibre-optic cables, upgrading cloud and data infrastructure, and promoting regulatory frameworks that safeguard citizens' digital rights. The third objective targets regional and continental economic growth and integration through six key areas of action. First, the Global Gateway will promote smart, fair, and affordable mobility and trade by developing multi-country transport infrastructure, enhancing regional connectivity, and improving safety and efficiency, thereby facilitating the movement of people and goods within Africa and between Africa and Europe. Second, it will provide financial and technical support to early-stage businesses, start-ups, and young entrepreneurs—particularly women—

to foster the creation of inclusive and decent jobs. In the health sector, the initiative will assist Africa in vaccine distribution, strengthen hospital systems, enhance local pharmaceutical capacity, and develop universal health coverage, supported by sound regulations and investment conditions. Finally, the Global Gateway aims to expand access to high-quality, modern, and equitable education. It will promote youth mobility, improve young professionals' access to the labour market, and encourage innovative solutions that build skills aligned with the needs of the dynamic global workforce. (Tagliapietra 2022, 9 - 13)

Tab. 2: Sectoral Breakdown of Global Gateway Flagship Projects in Africa (2023 & 2024)

	Africa		other regions		Total	
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
Climate & Energy	9	13	40	48	49	61
<i>Energy</i>	5	4				
<i>CRM</i>	1	1				
<i>Biodiversity</i>	1	2				
<i>other infrastructure</i>	1	3				
<i>others</i>	1	3				
Transport	-	7	17	25	17	32
Digital	3	4	8	14	11	18
Health	4	5	3	9	7	14
Education	1	1	2	12	3	13
Total	17	30	70	108	87	138

Source: Bilal and Teevan (2024), 7.

But as table 2 highlights, the Global Gateway's primary focus is on sustainable development and connectivity, with a strong emphasis on the Climate & Energy sector, which accounts for nearly half of all projects across Africa and other regions in 2023 and 2024. This reflects the initiative's commitment to supporting the green transition, in Africa as well as in Europe. Transport is another key area, especially in Africa, where project numbers rose notably in 2024, aligning with objectives around regional integration and mobility. Additionally, growing investments in Digital, Health, and Education sectors underscore efforts to enhance digital

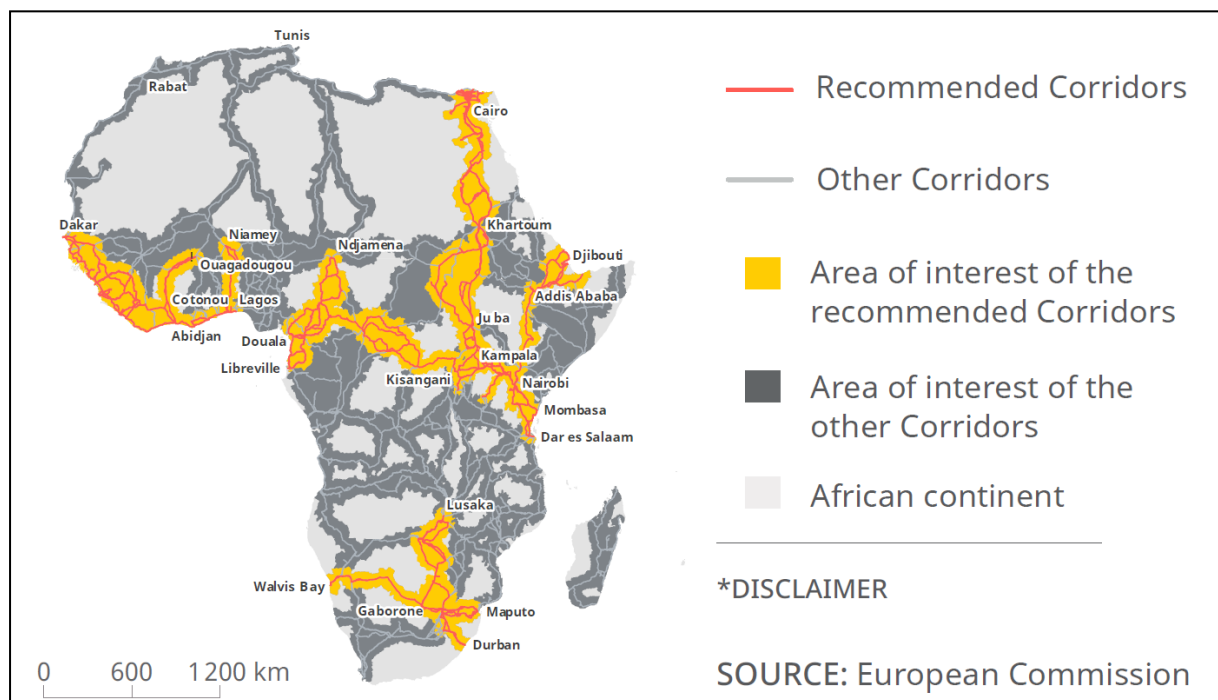
infrastructure, strengthen health systems, and improve access to quality education and skills training. But this project structure shows the geopolitical focus of the Global Gateway, already.

The rise of the increasingly authoritarian People's Republic of China as a global power, along with its ongoing conflict and trade tensions with the United States, has contributed to the European Union's growing strategic isolation. In response, the EU is being pushed to assert itself more firmly in global power politics. This shift is gradually transforming the EU's identity—from primarily an economic actor to an emerging geopolitical player—broadening its focus from trade competitiveness alone to encompassing both economic and strategic influence. Europe's geopolitical future increasingly depends on the strength and quality of its partnerships—particularly in Africa, where China's influence has grown to surpass that of Europe. Compared to previous investment programs, the Global Gateway sends a new geostrategic message: it aims to offer an alternative to China's BRI and strategically compete with China in the Global South, particularly in Africa. (Foretia et al. 2024, 4) Three years into implementation, it is evident that Global Gateway investments are also primarily directed toward physical infrastructure—like BRI projects—often with limited emphasis on sustainability and human development. Although some funded projects may include elements such as 'skills and technology transfer,' the broader infrastructure financing initiatives typically lack components aimed at strengthening human capital. While the Global Gateway prioritizes the development of strategic corridors to bolster Europe's economic security, ensuring local ownership and aligning with the interests of the EU's partners is essential for its long-term success. (Gavas and Granito 2024)

For instance, the EU has prioritized 11 transport corridors across Africa as key focal points for Global Gateway investments. (see fig. 2) These corridors, some of which are already partially developed, consist of extensive networks of roads, railways, waterways, ports, and pipelines designed to link areas of economic activity with urban hubs and international markets. Priority was given to the “EU interests” scenario—particularly the presence of European institutions and private sector companies, as well as access to raw materials—among other selection criteria. (Eickhoff 2023, 5) Among the most prominent undertakings of the Global Gateway in Africa is the “Lobito Corridor”, connecting the Angolan harbour in Lobito with the copper belt in Zambia and the South of the Democratic Republic of Congo. This corridor is expected to play a significant role in developing the electric vehicle (EV) battery value chain in the Western World by enabling sustainable infrastructure projects that strengthen diplomatic and economic ties among key partners, including the US, EU, Angola, DRC, and Zambia. Through a series of agreements—such as EU-led Memorandums of Understanding on critical minerals and value chain development—the corridor supports investment in transport infrastructure and sustainable mining. These initiatives not only diversify the EV-related critical mineral supply

chains but also enhance Angola, DRC, and Zambia's bargaining power in promoting better resource governance, reducing labour vulnerabilities, and advancing sustainable development. (see e.g. Nsakaza and Maponga 2025) However, up until mid-2024, the involvement of European institutions and financiers remained limited, highlighting the evident implementation challenges faced by the Global Gateway. (Africa Business Guide 2024) Other recent efforts include digital connectivity and healthcare development in East Africa, emerging cybersecurity collaborations in West Africa, green hydrogen projects in South Africa, and the expansion of rail infrastructure across East Africa. (ETT 2024) Also, the Namibia Strategic Partnership on critical raw materials and green hydrogen value chains, along with the Renewable Hydrogen Development initiative in Chile, are key Global Gateway flagship projects. Both exemplify the Team Europe approach and carry significant geostrategic importance for the EU, while also aiming to enhance local value creation and support the green transition in the partner countries. (Bilal and Teevan 2024, 12)

Fig. 2: Envisaged Strategic corridors by Global Gateway



Source: Global Gateway 2022, 2.

But if Global Gateway is better coordinated and consolidated—and thereby more geopolitically focused—than previously fragmented European efforts is still questionable. Despite notable

progress, the Global Gateway still often appears as a fragmented collection of projects, lacking the coherent political dialogue needed to generate meaningful strategic change and showing weak alignment with Europe's internal economic, political, and development priorities. (Bilal and Teevan 2024, V) Additionally, African partners have expressed growing concern that the EU may be shifting toward a more assertively interest-driven approach, using its resources—including development funding—primarily to advance its own economic objectives. These concerns are reinforced by the focus of the EU's flagship projects for 2023 and 2024, which heavily target strategic economic sectors that may not fully align with African development priorities. Many initiatives appear closely tied to the EU's efforts to secure access to critical raw materials needed for its Green Agenda, particularly along designated strategic corridors. For instance, the EIB's 2023–2025 operational plan explicitly states that “priority will be given to initiatives promoted together with the European Commission, such as Team Europe and Global Gateway.” (ETTg 2024)

Also a new report by Counter Balance, Eurodad, and Oxfam reveals concerns about the EU's Global Gateway initiative, arguing that it risks diverting aid funds toward benefiting big European businesses rather than addressing poverty and development. The report analyses 40 Global Gateway projects, finding that 60% of them benefit European companies like Siemens, Moller Group, and Suez, with some companies in the EU's Business Advisory Group receiving contracts funded by the initiative. Despite being funded by the EU's aid budget, which is meant to reduce poverty, only 16% of the projects focus on key development sectors like health, education, and research. The report also highlights issues such as lack of transparency, with limited publicly available information on projects, financing, and assessments of human rights or environmental impacts. Additionally, the Global Gateway may also worsen the debt crisis in the world's poorest countries, as it prioritizes loans over grants. The report also criticizes the potential negative impacts on human rights and the environment, such as water-intensive projects in water-scarce countries and the EU's involvement in controversial agreements like hydropower in Rwanda. The research concludes that the initiative could fuel corporate profits at the expense of public development goals, urging the EU to prioritize poverty reduction over private business interests. (EURODAD 2024) Therefore, the Global Gateway can be seen as a hybrid measure—on the one hand offering more opportunities for the LDCs in Africa, but on the other hand increasingly becoming a tool in the geopolitical competition between the supporting powers, China and the EU.

3.3 Conditionalities and Their Reception in Africa

Since several decades European as well as Western ODA is well-known in the Global South for its conditionalities. Also, the criticism of this conditionality can be traced back already into the 1960s. A prominent early advocate of this criticism was the Pan-African thinker Kwame Nkrumah, who, in his writings, particularly in his work "Neocolonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism" (1965), criticized the way Western countries continued to exert control over Africa through economic and political influence. At the same time, Frantz Fanon (1961) and Samir Amin (1973, 1974) argued that Western development aid was often linked to political and economic conditions that undermined the sovereignty of African countries and promoted the continuation of colonial structures. Especially, since the end of the Cold War, Western donor governments, including the European Union, have commonly linked foreign aid allocation to political criteria, such as the level of democracy and human rights standards. The reasons are simple: Recent studies indicate that foreign aid to autocratic regimes not only encourages patronage and clientelism but also tends to reinforce authoritarian structures (e.g. Bader and Faust, 2014; Kono et al., 2015). As a result, democratic governance is often seen as enhancing the socioeconomic impact of foreign aid, with more democratic governments typically directing more aid towards the provision of public goods that promote development. (Bodenstein and Faust 2017, 956) Also, from institutional economics the wealth-creating impacts of "inclusive institutions" like democracy, human rights and rule of law are well known. (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012)

Therefore, attaching appropriate conditions to development aid initially makes objective sense. But it must be recognised that most attempts to establish democracy in non-Western countries through political pressure or even force have failed to this day. As already S. Huntington (1996, 193) emphasised, democratization in the 1980s and 1990s proved most successful in countries with strong Christian and Western influences, particularly in predominantly Catholic or Protestant regions of Southern and Central Europe, parts of Latin America, and East Asia. In the Philippines, South Korea, and Taiwan, Christian leadership and American influence supported democratic transitions. In the former Soviet Union, democracy stabilized in the Baltic states, remained uncertain in Orthodox republics, and appeared unlikely in Muslim-majority republics. As a result, by the 1990s, most non-African countries influenced by Western Christianity had undergone democratic transitions, with Cuba as a notable exception. But in all other cultural regions of the world, democratization processes have been either unsuccessful or only marginally successful. Afghanistan and Iraq are the most visible examples.

That may explain the success of China's BRI. Both, China's BRI, launched in 2013, and the EU's Global Gateway, introduced in 2022, aim to promote infrastructure development, green

energy, and connectivity in Africa, but they are grounded in fundamentally different principles. The BRI imposes minimal conditions, requiring only adherence to the One China policy, and is broad in scope, allowing a wide range of projects to fall under its banner. Perhaps as a result, China is viewed much more positive in Africa than otherwise. A public opinion survey examining citizens' views of China across 25 countries found that some of the most positive perceptions of China are in African nations. (Barlett 2023)

In contrast, the Global Gateway again ties participation to commitments to human rights, democracy, and good governance. In concrete, Global Gateway initiatives are designed to enhance resilience, promote sustainability, and deepen cooperation with like-minded partners by addressing five key global challenges: digital transformation, climate and energy, transport, health, and education and research. These partnerships are guided by six foundational principles: (1) Democratic values and high standards: Projects must uphold the rule of law and respect international norms related to human rights, labour standards, and intellectual property. Ethical governance is central, with an emphasis on avoiding unsustainable debt burdens or problematic dependencies. (2) Good governance and transparency: All projects should be transparent, financially sound, and governed by open, competitive procurement processes. Stakeholder engagement through public consultations and civil society participation ensures inclusive development and equitable access to benefits and services. (3) Equal partnerships: Partner countries are to be fully involved in every stage—design, development, and implementation. Projects are tailored to meet the priorities and opportunities of partner nations while also aligning with the EU's strategic goals. (4) Green and clean: Global Gateway projects are committed to climate neutrality and support the shift toward a sustainable, circular global economy. This includes aligning with net-zero emissions targets, investing in climate-resilient infrastructure, and conducting thorough environmental impact assessments. (5) Security-focused: The initiative aims to strengthen secure and reliable connectivity by addressing physical, cyber, and hybrid threats, as well as economic coercion. It emphasizes protecting citizens from intrusive surveillance and other security risks. (6) Catalysing private investment: By leveraging public resources from the EU, its Member States, and international financial institutions, the Global Gateway seeks to unlock the potential of Europe's robust private sector and attract significant private capital investment. (van Wieringen 2024, 1-2)

But, how have these countries reacted to, engaged with, or potentially resisted the EU's efforts to influence their development trajectory through this global project? In general, African representatives have expressed criticism of the EU's perceived paternalistic approach. First, recipient countries tend to reject the EU's value-driven framework. What the EU defines as good governance is often seen by African nations as burdensome bureaucracy, with many countries lacking the institutional capacity to navigate the complex procedural requirements needed to

initiate investments. In contrast, China offers quicker project initiation, which is crucial in Africa where infrastructure projects are often tied to electoral cycles. (Heldt 2023, 8) For example, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has criticized the World Bank and Western countries for prioritizing lectures on democracy and human rights over tangible support for essential infrastructure projects like railways. This has contributed to a perception that the EU, hindered by bureaucratic processes and a strong focus on civil and political rights, fails to grasp the pressing infrastructure needs facing African nations. (Hodzi 2025) Second, for many African countries, the EU's environmental standards present a "double-edged sword." While environmental concerns are significant in regions like Nigeria, they are secondary to the country's pressing infrastructure needs. Rather than adhering to the EU's stringent criteria on energy transition, countries like Nigeria may opt for alternative partnerships, such as with China or Turkey, to meet their infrastructure demands (Farand, 2021). Third, a survey conducted by Afrobarometer between 2019 and 2021 across 34 African countries revealed that 55% of Africans believe that foreign lenders and donors should offer African governments more autonomy in deciding how development funding is utilized, and 51% want their governments to have greater freedom in determining their own approaches to democracy and human rights (Afrobarometer, 2021).

Additionally, local authorities criticize the Global Gateway initiative for not sufficiently involving them in its implementation, despite their crucial role in ensuring its success. They argue that while investments are made in specific territories, decision-making is often centralized, and the effectiveness of these investments depends on the local environment. As entities with a legal and constitutional mandate to promote local development and manage infrastructure, local authorities are essential in responding to locally defined needs and priorities. Therefore, they advocate for their inclusion in investment planning, resource mobilization, and implementation processes. Additionally, the Global Gateway strategy emphasizes delivering sustainable development outcomes that benefit local communities, a goal that local authorities, being the closest government entities to citizens, are best suited to facilitate. Local authorities believe their involvement is necessary to ensure projects align with democratic values, transparency, and good governance, and they call for meaningful consultation throughout the process to ensure investments meet local needs and foster long-term sustainability. (Bossuyt and Sabourin 2024, 3 – 4) Finally, African countries view the EU's competitive framing against China as "problematic" because it suggests the EU is more focused on geopolitical power dynamics than on genuinely addressing infrastructure needs. This geopolitical emphasis is seen as undermining African agency within the Global Gateway initiative (Farand, 2021). The core concept of the EU's Global Gateway initiative—its well-intentioned conditionality based on universal human rights, democratization, and similar principles—is therefore merely a continuation

of traditional development aid, which most Africans perceive as paternalistic, now combined with an openly stated geopolitical focus.

Nonetheless, the launch of the European Global Gateway initiative presents certain benefits for the African countries involved. The main positive aspect of the introduction of Global Gateway for African countries is the ability to choose from a range of multilateral, European, and bilateral investment options in infrastructure, reducing their reliance on any single donor.

4. Conclusion

The EU's Global Gateway initiative, launched in December 2021, aims to strengthen Europe's geopolitical influence, particularly in Africa, as a counter to China's BRI. Unlike traditional development aid, it focuses on strategic infrastructure investments, mobilizing up to €300 billion by 2027. This becomes possible by a shift towards private investment in multilateral development financing. But the EU will only meet its €300 billion target if Global Gateway is successful in attracting sufficient private investment. (Koch et al. 2023, 2) However, the volume of financial commitments under Global Gateway overlaps significantly with existing EU ODA, suggesting that it is more a reframing and consolidation of Europe's development finance than a new, additional funding stream.

But, the EU's Global Gateway initiative marks a strategic shift in European ODA towards a more investment-driven and market-oriented model. While continuing the EU's historical commitment to African development, the initiative reflects a clear geopolitical intent to counterbalance China's growing influence, particularly through its BRI. Despite these strategic shifts, the Global Gateway's focus on sustainable development and adherence to high environmental and social standards may position it as a complementary alternative to China's BRI, rather than a direct competitor. But at the moment the overwhelming investment in physical infrastructure—mainly in Sub-Sahara Africa—emphasises the competitive geopolitical aspect of the Global Gateway. Therefore, as the initiative progresses, it will be critical to assess how effectively it can balance its geopolitical goals with the development needs of African countries, ensuring that it promotes both economic growth and long-term stability. Accordingly, the Global Gateway can be seen as a hybrid tool, balancing development goals with geopolitical ambitions. However, the EU faces challenges in becoming a full-fledged geopolitical force. While not yet a superpower, the EU is positioning itself as a global influencer, balancing economic strength with a growing emphasis on security and geopolitical strategy.

Double-edged are the remaining conditionalities of the Global Gateway. On the one hand, conditionalities linked to aid can promote good governance, democracy, and human rights, improving governance standards and reducing corruption in Africa. They also encourage sustainable development by imposing environmental standards and attracting private investment for economic growth and regional integration. On the other hand, they are often seen as paternalistic and bureaucratic, frustrating recipient countries. They may not align with local priorities, especially in sectors like infrastructure, leading countries to seek alternatives like China. Additionally, local authorities are often excluded from decision-making, and geopolitical motivations behind conditionalities can undermine African autonomy, making the aid less effective. Indeed, there has been a noticeable anti-Chinese backlash in many African countries, with widespread concerns about Beijing's perceived colonial behaviour and the potential risks of "debt trap diplomacy," which can create new dependencies by leveraging control over African nations' infrastructure and resources. (see Wrobel 2025) Therefore, the Global Gateway is a great alternative for Africa. But in this context, granting African countries greater agency is crucial for the successful implementation of the Global Gateway initiative. But as the EU moves forward, it must be cautious not to replicate the same dynamics of dominance, avoiding the trap of acting as a colonial power by imposing its own rules and priorities. (Heldt 2023, 8)

While the initiative promotes shared interests and "principled pragmatism," questions remain about whether it truly represents a shift from traditional EU development policies or continues to advance European self-interest, with unclear implications for African partner countries. That makes it at least in particular "old wine in new bottles". But, the establishment of Global Gateway has positioned the EU as a more prominent actor in global geopolitics, with a strategic emphasis on Africa as a key region for increasing both public and private investment. Nevertheless, it should be considered within the EU whether instead of conditionalities like democratisation for ODA the EU should act more with Soft Power, being a trustworthy partner for African societies and a model for democratisation itself. This would also reduce the contradiction between the European demands placed on recipient countries and its own growing role as a geopolitical player.

Literature

Acemoglu, D. and Robinson, J.A. (2012) *Why nations fail: the origins of power, prosperity, and poverty*. New York: Crown Business.

Africa Business Guide (2024) *Lobito-Bahn: Gateway für Rohstoffe in Zentralafrika?* Available at: <https://www.africa-business-guide.de/de/praxis/erfahrungen/-lobito-bahn-gateway-fuer-rohstoffe-in-zentralafrika-1774812> (Accessed 8 May 2025).

Afrobarometer (2021) *AD492: Beyond borders? Africans prefer self-reliant development but remain skeptical of free trade and open borders*. Available at: <https://www.afrobarometer.org/publication/ad492-beyondborders-africans-prefer-self-reliant-developmentremain-skeptical-free> (Accessed: 5 May 2025).

Alemayehou, M. and McNair, D. (2024) *False economy: Why Europeans should stop slashing development aid to Africa*. European Council on Foreign Relations. Available at: <https://ecfr.eu/article/false-economy-why-europeans-should-stop-slashing-development-aid-to-africa> (Accessed: 3 May 2025).

Amin, S. (1973) *Neo-Colonialism in West Africa*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Amin, S. (1974) *The Accumulation on a World Scale*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Bader, J. and Faust, J. (2014) 'Foreign Aid, Democratization, and Autocratic Survival', *International Studies Review*, 16(4), pp. 575–595.

Bartlett, K. (2023) 'Survey: Africans see China as positive force', *VOANews Africa*, 31 October. Available at: <https://www.voanews.com/a/survey-africans-see-china-as-positive-force/6813313.html> (Accessed: 3 May 2025).

Bodenstein, T. and Faust, J. (2017) 'Who Cares? European Public Opinion on Foreign Aid and Political Conditionality', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 55(5), pp. 955–973.

Bossuyt, J. and Sabourin, A. (2024) *The EU Global Gateway strategy: Giving local authorities a voice*. ECDPM Discussion Paper No. 378, September.

European Commission (2018) *External Evaluation of the European Union's Cooperation with the West Africa Region (2008–2016): Summary*. November. Available at: https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/document/download/fe4e60ce-f3bb-40a8-a44b-b60e3c726707_en?filename=eval-ue-afo-final-report-nov-2018-summary_en.pdf (Accessed: 5 May 2025).

European Council (2024) *Official development assistance: the EU and its member states remain the biggest global provider*. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/06/24/official-development-assistance-the-eu-and-its-member-states-remain-the-biggest-global-provider> (Accessed: 2 May 2025).

European Think Tank Group (ETTG) (2024) *The Global Gateway Three Years Later – An African Reality Check for the Next Commission*. Available at: <https://ettg.eu/global-gateway-three-years-later> (Accessed: 5 May 2025).

European Network on Debt and Development (EURODAD) (2024) *Global Gateway risks diverting EU aid budget to big business*. Available at: <https://www.eurodad.org/global-gateway-risks-diverting-eu-aid-budget-to-big-business> (Accessed: 2 May 2025).

Fanon, F. (1961) *The Wretched of the Earth*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Farand, C. (2021) 'As EU seeks to rival China's infrastructure offer, Africans are sceptical', *EURACTIV*, 20 December. Available at: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/> (Accessed: 5 May 2025).

Foretia, D.A., Kouam, J.C., Nantchouang, R., Soong, C., Vasselier, A. and Wiegand, G. (2024) 'Competing with China in Africa: Strategic Suggestions on the EU Global Gateway', in Fabian, N. (ed.) *Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, European Dialogue Programme*. August 2024.

Furness, M. and Keijzer, N. (2022) *Europe's Global Gateway: A new geostrategic framework for development policy?* Briefing Paper No. 1/2022, Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), Bonn. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.23661/bp1.2022> (Accessed: 2 May 2025).

Gavas, M. and Granito, L. (2024) What the Global Gateway Flagship Projects Tell Us about the EU's Priorities. Center for Global Development (ed.). Available at: <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/what-global-gateway-flagship-projects-tell-us-about-eus-priorities> (Accessed: 8 May 2025).

Gherasim, D.-P. (2024) *Global Gateway: Towards a European External Climate Security Strategy?* IFRI MEMOS, 11 April.

Global Gateway (2022) *EU-Africa: Global Gateway Investment Package - Strategic Corridors*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/attachment/874061/GG_Africa_StrategicCorridors.pdf (Accessed: 5 May 2025).

Hodzi, O. (2025) *Competing Visions: African Perceptions of the BRI and the Global Gateway*. China Observers in Central and Eastern Europe (CHOICE), 18 February. Available at: <https://chinaobservers.eu/competing-visions-african-perceptions-of-the-bri-and-the-global-gateway> (Accessed: 2 May 2025).

Huntington, S. (1996) *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Koch, S., Keijzer, N. and Furness, M. (2023) *The European Union's Global Gateway should reinforce but not replace its development policy*. The Current Column, 27 February. Bonn: IDOS.

Kono, D.Y., Montinola, G.R. and Verbon, N. (2015) 'Helping Hand or Heavy Hand? Foreign Aid, Regime Type, and Domestic Unrest', *International Political Science Review*, 36(4), pp. 409–424.

Nkrumah, K. (1965) *Neocolonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*. London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd.

Nsakaza, K. and Maponga, O. (2025) 'The Lobito Corridor as an Anchor of Economic and Value Chain Development in Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Zambia: Exploring the Issues', *South African Journal of Economics*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/saje.12402> (Accessed: 3 May 2025).

OECD (2025) *DAC2A: Aid (ODA) disbursements to countries and regions*, OECD Data Explorer. Available at: <https://data-explorer.oecd.org> (Accessed: 2 May 2025).

Panda, J.P. (2025) 'EU's Global Gateway strategy and building a global consensus vis-a-vis BRI', in Khachikyan, S., Panda, J. and Wrobel, R.M. (eds.) *Armenia and the Belt and Road Initiative: Perspectives from Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia*. London: Routledge, pp. 177–193.

Tagliapietra, S. (2022) *The Global Gateway: An Overview*. Washington, DC: Wilson Center, Infrastructure Policy Initiative.

Tagliapietra, S. (2024) 'The European Union's Global Gateway: An institutional and economic overview', *The World Economy*, 47, pp. 1326–1335. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/twec.13551> (Accessed: 2 May 2025).

van Wieringen, K. (2024) *Global Gateway 2030: Future of Europe's global infrastructure bid*. Brussels: European Parliamentary Research Service, PE 757.826 – July.

Wrobel, R. (2025) The Chinese Belt and Road Initiative combines economics and geopolitics: consequences for Armenia. In: S. Khachikyan, J.P. Panda and R. Wrobel, eds. *Armenia and the Belt and Road Initiative: challenges and problems*. London: Routledge, pp.13–27.

Ordnungspolitische Diskurse

Discourses in Social Market Economy

Herausgegeben von ...

Prof. Dr. Lachezar Grudev, Zwickau

Prof. Dr. Stefan Kolev, Berlin & Zwickau

Prof. Dr. habil. Bernhard Seliger, Seoul & Zwickau

Prof. Dr. Dr. Ralph Wrobel, Zwickau

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 2007 – 1 | Seliger, Bernhard; Wrobel, Ralph – Die Krise der Ordnungspolitik als Kommunikationskrise |
| 2007 – 2 | Sepp, Jüri - Estland – eine ordnungspolitische Erfolgsgeschichte? |
| 2007 – 3 | Eerma, Diana; Sepp, Jüri - Competition Policy's Role in Network Industries - Regulation and Deregulation in Estonia |
| 2007 – 4 | Clapham, Ronald - Welche Bedeutung haben nationale Wirtschaftsordnungen für die Zukunft der EU? Der Beitrag der sozialen Marktwirtschaft |
| 2007 – 5 | Strunz, Herbert – Staat, Wirtschaften und Governance |
| 2007 – 6 | Jang Tae-Seok - South Korea's Aid to North Korea's Transformation Process - Social Market Perspective |
| 2007 – 7 | Libman, Alexander - Big Business and Quality of Institutions in the Post-Soviet Space: Spatial Aspects |
| 2007 – 8 | Mulaj, Isa - Forgotten Status of Many: Kosovo's Economy under the UN and the EU Administration |
| 2007 – 9 | Dathe, Uwe - Wettbewerb ohne Wettbewerb? Über die Bedeutung von Reformen im Bildungswesen für die Akzeptanz der Wettbewerbsidee |
| 2007 – 10 | Noltze, Karl - Die ordnungspolitische Strategie des Landes Sachsen |
| | |
| 2008 – 1 | Seliger, Bernhard - Die zweite Welle – ordnungspolitische Herausforderungen der ost-asiatischen Wirtschaftsentwicklung |
| 2008 – 2 | Gemper, Bodo Rheinische Wegbereiter der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft: Charakter zeigen im Aufbruch |
| 2008 – 3 | Decouard, Emmanuel - Das „Modèle rhénan“ aus französischer Sicht |
| 2008 – 4 | Backhaus, Jürgen - Gilt das Coase Theorem auch in den neuen Ländern? |
| 2008 – 5 | Ahrens, Joachim - Transition towards a Social Market Economy? Limits and Opportunities |
| 2008 – 6 | Wrobel, Ralph - Sonderwirtschaftszonen im internationalen Wettbewerb der Wirtschaftssysteme: ordnungspolitisches Konstrukt oder Motor institutionellen Wandels? |

- 2009 – 1 Wrobel, Ralph - The Double Challenge of Transformation and Integration: German Experiences and Consequences for Korea
- 2009 – 2 Eerma Diana; Sepp, Jüri - Estonia in Transition under the Restrictions of European Institutional Competition
- 2009 – 3 Backhaus, Jürgen - Realwirtschaft und Liquidität
- 2009 – 4 Connolly, Richard - Economic Structure and Social Order Type in Post-Communist Europe
- 2009 – 5 Dathe, Uwe – Wie wird man ein Liberaler? Die Genese der Idee des Leistungswettbewerbs bei Walter Eucken und Alexander Rüstow
- 2009 – 6 Fichert, Frank - Verkehrspolitik in der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft
- 2009 – 7 Kettner, Anja; Rebien, Martina – Job Safety first? Zur Veränderung der Konzessionsbereitschaft von arbeitslosen Bewerbern und Beschäftigten aus betrieblicher Perspektive
- 2009 – 8 Mulaj, Isa – Self-management Socialism Compared to Social Market Economy in Transition: Are there Convergent Paths?
- 2009 – 9 Kochskämper, Susanna - Herausforderungen für die nationale Gesundheitspolitik im Europäischen Integrationsprozess
- 2009 – 10 Schäfer, Wolf – Dienstleistungsökonomie in Europa: eine ordnungspolitische Analyse
- 2009 – 11 Sepp, Jüri – Europäische Wirtschaftssysteme durch das Prisma der Branchenstruktur und die Position der Transformationsländer
- 2009 – 12 Ahrens, Joachim – The politico-institutional foundation of economic transition in Central Asia: Lessons from China
- 2009 – 13 Pitsoulis, Athanassios; Siebel, Jens Peter – Zur politischen Ökonomie von Defiziten und Kapitalsteuerwettbewerb
-
- 2010 – 01 Seliger, Bernhard – Theories of economic miracles
- 2010 – 02 Kim, Gi-eun - Technology Innovation & Green Policy in Korea
- 2010 – 03 Reiljan, Janno - Vergrößerung der regionalen Disparitäten der Wirtschaftsentwicklung Estlands
- 2010 – 04 Tsahkna, Anna-Greta, Eerma, Diana - Challenges of electricity market liberalization in the Baltic countries
- 2010 – 05 Jeong Ho Kim - Spatial Planning and Economic Development in Border Region: The Experiences of Gangwon Province, Korea
- 2010 – 06 Sepp, Jüri – Ordnungspolitische Faktoren der menschlichen Entwicklung
- 2010 – 07 Tamm, Dorel - System failures in public sector innovation support measures: The case of Estonian innovation system and dairy industry
- 2010 – 08 Clapham, Ronald - Wirtschaftswissenschaft in Zeiten der Globalisierung
- 2010 – 09 Wrobel, Ralph - Geldpolitik und Finanzmarktkrise: Das Konzept der „unabhängigen Zentralbank“ auf dem ordnungspolitischen Prüfstand
- 2010 – 10 Rutsch, Andreas; Schumann, Christian-Andreas; Wolle, Jörg W. - Postponement and the Wealth of Nations
- 2010 – 11 Ahrens, Joachim; Jünemann, Patrick - Transitional Institutions, Institutional Complementarities and Economic Performance in China: A 'Varieties of Capitalism' Approach
- 2010 – 12 Kolev, Stefan; Der bulgarische Weg seit 1989, Wachstum ohne Ordnung?

- 2011 – 1 Wrobel, Ralph – Energiewende ohne Markt? Ordnungspolitische Perspektiven für den deutschen Stromsektor
- 2011 – 2 Rõigas, Kärt – Linkage between productivity and innovation in different service sectors
- 2011 – 3 Sepp, Jüri – Institutionelle Innovationen im Infrastrukturbereich: Beispiel Post in Estland
- 2011 – 4 Effelsberg, Martin – Measuring absorptive capacity of national innovation systems
- 2011 – 5 Jänsch, Janina – Die Anrechnung natürlicher und anthropogener Effekte auf terrestrische Ökosysteme im Rahmen des Kyoto-Protokolls
- 2011 – 6 Platje, Joost – Institutional Change for Creating Capacity and Capability for Sustainable Development – a club good perspective
- 2011 – 7 Tamm, Dorel; Ukrainski, Kadri – Functional Approach to National Systems of Innovation: The Case of a Small Catching-up Country
- 2011 – 8 Nusser, Michael – Optionen zur Stärkung der Leistungsfähigkeit von Innovationssystemen
-
- 2012 – 1 Kolev, Stefan – Wider die „Après nous le déluge“-Logik. Ordnungspolitik, Innovation und Nachhaltigkeit.
- 2012 – 2 Varblane, Urmas - National Innovation Systems: Can they be copied?
- 2012 – 3 Reiljan, Janno / Paltser, Ingra - Struktur und Zusammenhänge des staatlichen Innovationssystems und der Innovationspolitik
- 2012 – 4 Lenz, Justus - Innovationssystem Internet: Eine institutionenökonomische Analyse der digitalen Revolution
- 2012 – 5 Chang Jai Chun - Erfolgsfaktoren für "Internationale Projekte"
- 2012 – 6 Gerl, Jörg – Global denken, lokal handeln: Gebäudesanierung als Beitrag zum Klimaschutz am konkreten Beispiel
- 2012 – 7 Seliger, Bernhard – Grünes Wachstum in Südkorea – Etikettenschwindel, Neo-Keynesianismus oder ein neues Paradigma der Ordnungspolitik?
-
- 2013 – 1 Wrobel, Ralph – Economic Models for New Industrializing Countries in Comparative Perspective
- 2013 – 2 Park, Sung-Jo– Developmental State in Korea (60-70ties) Revisited: Institution-Building for the Making of 'Coordinated Market'
- 2013 – 3 Reiljan, Janno & Paltser, Ingra – The Implementation of Research and Development Policy in European and Asian Countries
- 2013 – 4 Hoen, W. Herman – Emerging Market Economies and the Financial Crisis: Is there Institutional Convergence between Europe and Asia?
- 2013 – 5 Kroos, Karmo – Developmental Welfare Capitalism in East Asia with a Special Emphasis on South Korea
-
- 2014 – 1 Ahrens, Joachim & Stark, Manuel – Independent Organizations in Authoritarian Regimes: Contradiction in Terms or an Effective Instrument of Developmental States
- 2014 – 2 Turk, Erik – Practicing Catching-up: a Comparison of Development Models of East Asian and Central-Eastern European Countries
- 2014 – 3 Sepp, Jüri; Varblane, Uku – The Decomposition of Productivity Gap between Estonia and Korea
- 2014 – 4 Sepp, Jüri; Kaldaru, Helje and Joamets, Jürgen – The Characteristics and Position of the Economic Structures of Estonia and Korea among the OECD Countries

2015 – 1	Bartniczak, Bartosz; Ptak, Michał – Green Jobs in the Renewable Energy Sector
2015 – 2	Freudenberg, Sandro; Stephan, Sandra – Fachkräftebedarfsdeckung heute und in der Zukunft: Handlungsempfehlung für eine erfolgreiche Personalbedarfsdeckung in Unternehmen
2015 – 3	Kauf, Sabina – Die Unternehmensanforderungen an die Logistikspezialisten und akademische Ausbildung der Logistiker
2015 – 4	Komulainen, Roney – Employer Branding for SMEs: Attracting Graduating Students in IT Industry
2016 – 1	Wrobel, Ralph – Der deutsche Arbeitsmarkt zwischen Fachkräftemangel und Immigration: Ordnungspolitische Perspektiven in der Flüchtlingskrise
2016 – 2	Walter, Angela – Unternehmen suchen Fachkräfte - Fachkräfte suchen Unternehmen: Employer Branding als Personalstrategie für Recruiting und Bindung von Fachkräften der Generation Y in kleinen und mittelständischen Unternehmen am Beispiel von Sachsen
2016 – 3	Monika Paradowska; Joost Platje – Key challenges facing the European transport labour market
2016 – 4	Behr, Michael – Arbeitsmarkt- und Wirtschaftsentwicklung in Ostdeutschland: Herausforderungen, Probleme und Strategien für Sachsen
2017 – 1	Sepp, Jüri; Kaldaru, Helje; Varblane, Uki - The Development and Typology of the Employment Structure in OECD Countries
2017 – 2	Schneider, Clemens - Die Offene Gesellschaft und ihre Zuwanderer: Kritische Gedanken zu einer planwirtschaftlichen Integrationspolitik
2017 – 3	Seo Byung-Chul, Bernhard Seliger - Der Arbeitsmarkt in Nordkorea am Beispiel des Industriekomplexes in Kaesong
2017 – 4	Stefan Kolev - Individualism and Demographic Change
2018 – 1	Ralph Wrobel - Die Unabhängigkeit der Deutschen Bundesbank: eine Erfolgsgeschichte
2019 – 1	Kadri Ukrainski; Hanna Kanep; Margit Kirs; Erkki Karo - International R&D Networks of Firms: A Country-level Analysis of the EU Framework Programmes
2019 – 2	Rossitsa Yalamova - Blockchain Angels or Demons of a Free International Order
2019 – 3	Viire Täks / Maaja Vadi - Who and how do participate in strategic planning?
2019 – 4	Mark Kretschmer - Karl Polanyi and Economics: Polanyi's Pendulum in Economic Science
2019 – 5	Tim Schneegans - Escaping the comfort zone: a three-level perspective on filtering effects and counter-measures
2019 – 6	Katsuhiko Hirasawa - Globalization and Small Businesses
2020 – 1	Ralph Wrobel - The "China Effect": Changes in International Trade Patterns as Reasons for Rising "Anti-Globalism"
2020 – 2	Bernhard Seliger - North Korea's political economy: Hybrid economic institutions and the contributions of German order policy (Ordnungspolitik)
2020 – 3	Alexander Heß - Happiness and the Welfare State in Times of Globalization: A Review of Empirical Findings

2020 – 4	Ralph Wrobel - Das Modell „Soziale Marktwirtschaft“: Chancen im internationalen Systemwettbewerb zwischen Freier Marktwirtschaft und chinesischem Staatskapitalismus
2021 – 1	Werner Pascha - Duisburg and its port, end point of China's new silk road – opportunities and risks
2021 – 2	Anastasia Barannikova - South Korea, China and the Road and Belt initiative: economic and political factors
2021 – 3	Artyom Lukin - Road and Belt, Iron Silk Road and Russian-Chinese geopolitical cooperation and competition
2021 – 4	Hans-Ulrich Seidt - Korea and Germany as Endpoints of the New Silk Road: Opportunities for Cooperation
2021 – 5	Ralph Wrobel - Kim Jong-un's Byungjin Policy: Support or Obstacle for Economic Convergence on the Korean Peninsula?
2021 – 6	Bernhard Seliger - The Iron Silk Road and North Korea: is there any chance to move forward?
2021 – 7	Joohyun Go - The prospects of cultural exchange to foster the economic relationship between the EU and Korea
2021 – 8	Duyeon Kim – Belt and Road in the New Geo-Political Competition: China, the United States, Europe and Korea
2021 – 9	Alexander Heß, Christoph Hindermann – Trade Effects on Happiness in Asia
2021 – 10	Joachim Ahrens, Katja Kalkschmied – China in Africa: Competitor of the EU?
2021 – 11	Tereza Novotná - The European Union and Korea between the US and China: geopolitical aspects of connectivity from the soft to hard power approaches
2021 – 12	Jagannath Panda – China's BRI Diplomacy: What It Means to India and India's Rise
2022 – 1	Ralph M. Wrobel - The Chinese Belt and Road Initiative between Economics and Geopolitics: Consequences for Armenia
2022 – 2	Hans-Christian Brauweiler / Aida Yerimpasheva - Challenges and opportunities to develop Kazakhstani logistics projects within the BRI
2022 – 3	Alexander Heß / Christoph M. Hindermann - The BRI: Trade Integration and Stock Market Synchronization – A Review of Empirical Findings
2022 – 4	Davit Gondauri - Georgian railway's Experiences with Belt and Road Initiative: Advantages and Disadvantages
2022 – 5	Kiyalbek Akmoldoev - How realistic is Belt and Road Initiative for Kyrgyzstan and Central Asian Countries?
2022 – 6	Atom S. Margaryan / Haroutyun T. Terzyan / Emil A. Grigoryan - Belt and Road Initiative as an Innovative Platform for Technology Transfer: Opportunities for Armenia
2022 – 7	Sos Khachikyan / Jiang Hongzhen - Spatial Administration and Legal Aspects of the Belt and Road Initiative: Innovative Solutions for Armenia
2022 – 8	Karen Grigoryan / Ali Arpanahi - Perspectives of Armenian - Iranian Economic Relations within Belt and Road Initiative
2022 – 9	Armen Ju. Ghazaryan / Liana Marukyan / Meline V. Abrahamyan / Meline A. Ayvazyan - The Opportunities of Economic and Legal Cooperation between EU – Armenia within the framework of the BRI
2022 – 10	Jagannath Panda - EU's Global Gateway Strategy and Building a Global Consensus vis-a-vis BRI

- 2022 – 11 Katja Kalkschmied - Chinese lending specifics and projects in the Caucasus region: A look into project-level data
- 2022 – 12 Atom Margaryan / Emil Grigoryan / Armen Minassian - BRI as Chance for Regional Cooperation: Iran - Armenia Economic Relations
- 2023 – 1 Hans-Christian Brauweiler; Aida Yerimpasheva; Assem Zakirova - The Impact of Logistics on Economic Cooperation in Central Asia
- 2023 – 2 Ralph Wrobel – The Changing Geopolitics in the South Caucasus during the War in Ukraine: Chances and Risks for the Region
- 2025 – 1 Ralph Wrobel - Global Gateway and Africa: Old Wine in New Bottles? - A Critical Analysis of EU Development Aid Discourses